

# Heat Illness Hazard Alert

Between 2013 and 2023, 442 U.S. workers died from heat-related illnesses, including 7 workers in Oregon<sup>1</sup>. With hotter summers and more extreme heat events becoming more common, protecting all workers from extreme weather conditions is increasingly important. In response to rising temperatures and more frequent heat events, Oregon implemented heat illness prevention regulations for workers, making it only one of five states with such rules as of 2025.

<sup>1</sup>National Safety Council. (n.d.). *Exposure to Environmental Heat*. National Safety Council. <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/safety-topics/exposure-to-environmental-heat/data-details/>

## Please observe the following safety tips:

- Employers should be familiar with Oregon OSHA regulations and requirements for preventing heat-related illness (see Oregon OSHA's Heat Illness Prevention Key Requirements, FAQ, and Training below). If further assistance is needed, consider scheduling a free Oregon OSHA consultation appointment (see Oregon OSHA Consultation Services below).
- Employers should provide training on heat hazards, steps to prevent heat-related illnesses, how to recognize the signs and symptoms of dehydration and heat illness, and how to respond in case of a heat-related emergency.
- Employers must provide access to adequate water; rest breaks in shaded, cooled, or air-conditioned areas; and appropriate acclimatization schedules.
- Workers should stay hydrated, as it is essential to prevent heat-related illness. Workers should drink water frequently throughout the day rather than waiting until feeling thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeinated drinks in hot conditions. For more information on hydration, refer to OSHA's Keeping Workers Well-Hydrated fact sheet below.
- Workers who are new to the job, climate, or conditions should gradually build up a tolerance to heat by working shorter periods over one or two weeks before transitioning to longer shifts. This allows the body to safely adjust to hot working conditions and should also be followed when temperatures rise suddenly, such as during heat waves.



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## Safety tips (continued)

- Workers should be aware of personal risk factors, such as certain health conditions, medications, physical traits, and lifestyle choices that may increase susceptibility to heat-related illness. For more information, refer to OSHA's Personal Risk Factors and Heat Exposure fact sheet below.
- Employers should consider the use of heat monitoring wearable devices that track core body temperature, heart rate, and other vital signs to help detect early symptoms of heat-related illness and alert both workers and supervisors.

Safety tips sources: <https://osha.oregon.gov/edu/courses/Pages/heat-illness-prevention-online-course.aspx>

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## Heat Illness Prevention Resources

Oregon OSHA Heat Illness Prevention  
Key Requirements:  
<https://osha.oregon.gov/OSHAPubs/factsheets/fs91.pdf>

Oregon OSHA Heat Illness Prevention  
FAQs:  
<https://osha.oregon.gov/OSHAPubs/5866.pdf>

Oregon OSHA Heat Illness Prevention  
Training:  
<https://osha.oregon.gov/edu/courses/Pages/heat-illness-prevention-online-course.aspx>

Oregon OSHA Consultation Services:  
<https://osha.oregon.gov/consult/pages/index.aspx>

OSHA Keeping Workers Well-Hydrated  
fact sheet:  
<https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA4372.pdf>

OSHA Personal Risk Factors and Heat  
Exposure fact sheet:  
<https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA4374.pdf>

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## Examples of Fatal Stories

**Case 1:** A 71-year-old electrician, working in an attic of a single-story restaurant/club with a reported temperature of 100+ °F, died from probable heat stroke. The outdoor temperature that day recorded a high of 88°F. The building had a flat roof and uninsulated crawl space. Around noon, the electrician was observed on a ladder entering the crawl space. It was several hours later in the evening that he was found in the attic unresponsive.

**Case 2:** A 21-year-old choker setter was setting chokers on a log, when he collapsed. Nearby workers called for medical help and the employee was transported to a hospital, where he died the following day of heat exhaustion.

**Case 3:** A 49-year-old carpenter was conducting a roofing inspection on an extremely hot day. Temperatures reached a record-breaking 115°F that day. Upon coming down from the roof, he became ill and collapsed. He was transported to the hospital, where he died of heat illness 11 days later.